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ABSTRACT

This research study sought to explore the relationship between spiritual reading and its effects on human growth. The emphasis of the study was how participants felt they had grown in their relationship with God through reading. Participants were clergypersons in the Tidewater, Virginia area. The 30 pastors interviewed for this study indicated that reading did help them grow in their relationship with God and in other areas of their lives. Only two respondents stated that a book written by a spiritual master had helped them in their religious growth. Reading tended to be a relationship between the literature and the reader. Therefore, no cause-and-effect relationship could be found between the type of literature and the growth produced. There was no relationship found between any reading and any growth reported. Based on these findings, further research is recommended in many areas of spiritual literature. Included in the recommendations are that research be conducted on: (1) personality type and the preference for reading spiritual literature; (2) what clergy, non-clergy adults, young adults, and children have found helpful in their spiritual growth; (3) the differences in the spiritual growth between men and women; and (4) the differences between religious and non-religious persons regarding what they have found helpful in their spiritual growth. Contains an 80-item bibliography, a 46-item list of works by spiritual masters. (KW)

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SPIRITUAL READING AND ITS EFFECTS ON HUMAN GROWTH

by

JAMES C. DUNCAN, M.DIV., MA

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CHAPTER I

NATURE OF THE RESEARCH

Overview

Today, there is a renewed interest in the spiritual life. One area of concern for educators, counseling psychologists, and spiritual directors is the relationship between human development and spirituality (Clinebell, 1975:19; Thayer, 1985:13). Many behavioral scientists and educators are finding that the spiritual life is essential for humans to reach their full potential. Howard Clinebell, a pastoral psychologist and educator, has indicated that the key to all human growth and personality development is spiritual (Clinebell, 1975:101). He stated in his writings that if one has a positive, life-affirming, reality-respecting spirituality, then one can fully develop all aspects of his or her life. Conversely, if one has a diminished spiritual life, then he or she is unable to develop a life-affirming, reality-respecting world view and therefore cannot reach his or her full potential (Clinebell, 1975:107). Other social scientists support the above position (Assagioli, 1976:192; Brown, 1983:21).

While a renewed interest in the spiritual life appears to be present, some individuals believe that within the Christian church there are few competent spiritual directors (Kelsey, 1985:5; Shideler, 1985:6). Traditionally,

when one decided to begin his or her spiritual journey, he or she would find a spiritual director or guide. The director was chosen because of his or her deep spiritual knowledge and his or her ability to transmit that knowledge to the seeker. They would help the novice analyze his or her life, solve spiritual and temporal problems, and develop the disciplines needed to reach spiritual maturity (Thornton, 1984:17). Some religious leaders feel that the art of spiritual direction was lost within the church when interest in psychotherapy began to prevail among the clergy (Oden, 1984:33). Recent research in the behavioral sciences indicates that man has a spiritual nature which affects his ability to reach full human potential. Few spiritual directors with both the knowledge of depth psychology and the Christian spiritual tradition are trained at the present time to help persons seeking spiritual guidance (Thayer, 1985:13).

As a result of the lack of competent spiritual directors, the novice must depend heavily upon reading spiritual literature in order to self-direct his or her spiritual path (Shideler, 1985:6). A recent study revealed that among those surveyed, 47 percent had read a book related to some form of spiritual living. Of the above population, one half reported experiencing a faith change (The Princeton Religion Research Center, 1985:51). While reading may be one way for many individuals to self-direct their spiritual lives, little research has been conducted on the specific nature of the literature people are reading to enhance their spiri-

tual growth. Traditionally, writings of the spiritual masters have been recommended. Some individuals have found these books to be of little value and have turned to the more imaginative works of fiction and poetry. Others have found the reading of biographies and history to be most helpful in growing in their spiritual lives (Shideler, 1985: 5; Whitmore, 1986:166). Yet, no research has been conducted to find what people are reading to enhance their spirituality.

Statement of the Problem

To determine the kinds of literature individuals have read in order to enhance their spiritual growth.

Significance of the Problem

Due to renewed dialogue between behavioral scientists and spiritual tradition, an evaluation of spiritual reading must take place. Traditionally, spiritual reading has been limited to faith building and preparation for prayer (Pennington, 1977:24-25). Reading of spirituality related literature was viewed as a time when the Spirit of God could speak to the reader through Holy Scripture or the life of a saint. Realizing that spirituality is a key factor in human growth and development, research is needed in all aspects of the spiritual life including the discipline of spiritual reading.

Spiritual reading is one of the spiritual disciplines which has helped people grow in their relationship with God, other individuals, and even themselves. Writings indicate

that reading spiritual literature motivated St. Augustine to make his final decision to become a Christian (St. Augustine, 1971:117-118). St. Teresa of Avila could not find a spiritual director to meet her needs and turned to books in order to discover her spiritual path (Muto, 1984:74-75). John Wesley stated that reading of Imitation of Christ, Holy Living and Dying, and Christian Perfection prepared the way for his religious experience and the Methodist movement (Miller, 1953:24). The German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote that "...every day I do not penetrate more deeply into the knowledge of God's word in Holy scripture is a lost day for me" (Bonhoeffer, 1986:30). Father Basil Pennington reported that those who practice centering prayer and meditation, of which spiritual reading is a part, experience a growth in faith, in self-understanding, and in their ability to love others (Pennington, 1988:10-19).

Spiritual growth, therefore, has an impact on the development of personality. In each of these instances, reading contributed to the spiritual growth of the individual through helping each of the individuals develop one or more of the following: a viable philosophy of life, a relationship with a loving God, an understanding of one's values, a renewing of one's moments of transcendence, or a union with a caring community. Through spiritual growth, each of these individuals was able to make changes in his/her life which affected his/her relationship with God, other persons, and themselves. Clinebell stated that personality growth

can take place in any six areas of personality, but spiritual growth is the most important because it gives the structure of value and meaning by which all growth can be integrated within the personality (Clinebell, 1979:36-37).

Clearly, research is needed on how spiritual reading affects human growth. Additionally there is a lack of research in the area of spiritual reading. Dr. Susan Muto of the Institute of Formative Spirituality at Duquesne University and Dr. Robert Mulholland of Asbury Theological Seminary are the only two current Christian scholars conducting research on the topic of spiritual reading. The Muto research has centered on how to read spiritual texts so the reader can hear the voice of God. Her work has been limited to the Roman Catholic spiritual masters. The Mulholland studies have been limited to the reading of Holy Scripture and personal transformation. While reading has been seen as important to the development of the spiritual life, little research has been conducted on the forms of growth which spiritual literature causes. Most of the research which has been conducted in the nature of spiritual growth has centered on what is expected to be read and not on what people are reading to enhance their spiritual life. Dr. Muto reported that no dissertations or theses have been written on reading and spiritual growth at Duquesne University (Muto, 1988:personal communication). Therefore, the significance of this study is that the resulting data relates the kinds of literature which people are reading for

spiritual development and how that reading enhances their spiritual development. This information can be of use by pastors, religious educators, and counselors concerned with spiritual growth.

Limitations of the Research

The limitations that governed this research study were as follows:

1. This study was limited to the Christian spiritual tradition.
2. The study was limited to research on the reading of spiritual literature found within the Christian spiritual tradition.
3. The subjects used for this research study were ministers affiliated with Christian churches.
4. The data gathered from this research study were employed in making generalizations only about subjects surveyed and the nature of their spiritual reading.
5. The data gathered for this study were elicited from a questionnaire designed specifically for this project.
6. Information provided by the respondents may or may not reflect their true beliefs and behaviors.

Goals and Objectives

The overall goals and objectives of this research study were as follows:

1. To develop a list of reading resources based on those which the respondents have found to be helpful in their spiritual growth.
2. To create a list of the methods to read spiritual literature used by the respondents.
3. To create a list of the ways those surveyed enhanced their lives through spiritual reading.

Analytical Questions

Five analytical questions guided the research in this study and are presented below:

AQ_1 What books other than Holy Scripture have the respondents found to be helpful for growth in their spiritual life?

AQ_2 Are books the respondents found helpful for growth in their spiritual life by the spiritual masters according to a list prepared for this study?

AQ_3 Do the respondents have a method of reading spiritual literature?

AQ_4 What types of methods are used by respondents who have a method to read spiritual literature?

AQ_5 What changes did the respondents feel reading spiritual literature made in their lives?

Assumptions

The following assumptions governed the development of this research study:

1. That humans have a spiritual nature which must be developed in order to reach their full potentials.

2. That spiritual reading can help persons develop their spiritual lives.
3. That a group of pastors could be found to answer questions pertaining to their spiritual reading.
4. That respondents in this survey had read some form of literature, other than Holy Scripture, which had helped them in their spiritual lives.
5. That if the respondents had read a book, other than Holy Scripture, which helped them in their spiritual lives, they could remember the titles of the literature.
6. That the respondents could describe their method of reading spiritual literature.
7. That the respondents could identify the growth in their lives due to reading spiritual literature.
8. That the respondents would be honest in their answers.

Definitions

The following definitions were used in conducting this research study:

1. Dialogical Reading--Reading of a reflective nature in which the reader seeks to hear the voice of God. It can be a form of meditation (Pennington, 1979: 30-31).
2. Dimensions of Growth--Six interdependent areas in which growth can occur: in the relationship with mind, in the relationships with other people, in

the relationship with the biosphere, in the relationship with groups and institutions, and in the spiritual relationship with the spiritual life (Clinebell, 1979:19).

3. Growth--The movement toward wholeness by developing the mental-spiritual-relational aspects of human personality (Clinebell, 1979:18).
4. Growth Counseling--A theory of personality and therapy developed by Howard Clinebell.
5. Lectio Divina--Latin for divine reading. Includes all forms of spiritual reading, but usually is reserved for reading of Holy Scripture as a form of contemplative prayer or in preparation for prayer (Pennington, 1979:33-34).
6. Meditative Reading--A reflective reading similar to dialogical reading (Muto, 1973:16).
7. Occasional Reading--Dialogical or meditative reading which is centered on a topic or problem (e.g., death, Advent, sickness, hope, etc.) the reader may wish to reflect on (Pennington, 1979:31-33).
8. Pastor--An individual recognized by his or her church as being able to perform the religious duties of that church.
9. Relationship with God--A phrase used in this study to indicate spiritual growth.
10. Sacred Study--Academic study of Holy Scripture and the traditions of the church (Pennington, 1979:27-28).

11. Salugenic Religion--Health and growth producing religion. Clinebell stated that this type of religion has twenty-three different qualities (Clinebell, 1979:107-108)
12. Spiritual--The realm of human experience relating to values, meanings, and purpose. For the Christian, the term spiritual includes one relationship with God as understood in the Christian Scriptures (Clinebell, 1979:107-108).
13. Spiritual Growth--Increasing awareness of values, meanings, and purpose so that one can become a more inclusive, integrated, and effective person. For the Christian, this included his or her development of the relationship with God as understood in the Christian Scriptures and tradition.
14. Spiritual Masters--Those authors recognized as having great insight into the humankind relationship with God. Appendix A contains those authors considered spiritual masters for this research study.
15. Spiritual Reading--Reading which is done in order to increase spiritual growth and understanding of the religious and meaning traditions. For the Christian this reading includes the Holy Scripture and those pieces of literature which help the readers in their search for spiritual wholeness.
16. Spiritual Reading Guided Interview Checklist (SRGIC)--A checklist developed by the researcher

to collect data during interviews on spiritual reading. The SRGIC is found in Appendix B.

Setting

The respondents for this research study were clergypersons in the Tidewater Virginia area. These clergy were chosen for this study due to their accessibility by the researcher. A more specific introduction to this population will be presented in Chapter III.

Summary

The goals of this research are fourfold. The first goal is to determine the nature of literature which selected clergypersons are reading in order to enhance their spiritual growth. The second goal is to determine if their reading is the traditional texts of the Christian faith or if other literature is being read to develop spiritually. The third goal is to determine what methods are used when reading spiritual literature. The fourth goal is to determine how spiritual literature has helped the respondents grow in their relationship with God.

In order to answer the above questions, the following research design will be followed. First a review of related research and literature will be presented in Chapter II. Chapter III will outline the research protocols that were followed in order to gather the needed data. Chapter IV will report the data returned. Chapter V will present the summary, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

Introduction

Spiritual reading has a long tradition within the Christian Church. Many of the spiritual masters encouraged their disciples to read Holy Scripture and the great literature of religious devotion; however, most of their admonitions were on what to read and methods of reading. God was viewed as the author of any personality change within the disciple. Therefore little research has been conducted on how Christian spiritual reading affects personality. Transpersonal psychologists and educators are the only group which has conducted research in this area (Assagioli, 1976:208-213; Brown,1983:64; Whitmore,1986:24). Their research has centered on developing the spiritual nature in humans through reading literature from any and all religious traditions. Research based on reading and human growth in the Christian spiritual tradition is limited. The purpose of this review of related research and literature is to review the literature used in the formulation of Statement of the Problem found in Chapter I and the literature used to develop the research strategy and analysis of data in later chapters.

Spiritual Growth and Its Effects on Human Growth

Howard Clinebell stated that the key to all human growth toward wholeness is spiritual (Clinebell, 1979:101).

His theory of personality development is that positive religious values (salugenic religion) promotes a viable philosophy of life, creative values, a relationship with a loving God, the development of our higher self, a trustful belonging to the universe, the renewing of our moments of transcendence, and the development of our need for a caring community (Clinebell, 1979:106). Salugenic religion enriches each dimension of personality so that individuals can grow toward wholeness (Clinebell, 1979:37).

Growth Counseling is the theory which Clinebell developed to promote human growth. He described this theory as a "...human-potentials approach to the helping process that defines the goal as that of facilitating the maximum development of a person's potentialities...." (Clinebell, 1979:18). Clinebell believed that the basis of Growth Counseling is found in the Judeo-Christian tradition. The insight of St. Paul that humans are the children of God and the Genesis account indication that people were created in the image of God, Clinebell believed express the possibilities within each person (Clinebell, 1975:5). Clinebell believed that the life and ministry of Christ helped develop the potentials of persons. Christ came to enable people to find life "...in all its fullness [John 1010 NEB]" (Clinebell, 1975:6). Clinebell believed that human resistance to growth is sin, but that this resistance to growth can be overcome and humans can reach their full potential in and through God (Clinebell, 1975:6-7).

Clinebell understood personality to be "...dynamic, developing, changing stream, not a fixed quantity to be uncovered" (Clinebell, 1979:39). Human growth occurs in six interdependent areas. Growth can occur in the mind, in the body, in relationship with others, in a relationship with the biosphere, in a relationship with groups and institutions, and in the spiritual life (Clinebell, 1979:19). These six dimensions of growth are interdependent facets and growth in one leads to change in the other five areas. Human personality is constantly changing due to growth, or lack of growth, in any of these six dimensions of life. Salugenic religion enables the person to integrate his or her growth in each area of his or her life.

A trait of salugenic religion helps individuals integrate their growth is a viable philosophy of life. A viable belief system helps provide a foundation of meaning and purpose for the individual. Clinebell stated that the "...conviction of one's existence has a purpose, in spite of the inevitable tragedies of life, equips one to live more fully in the midst of those tragedies" (Clinebell, 1979:116). A philosophy of life enables one to interpret change and growth and decide how to apply that growth to his or her life.

Salugenic religion helps the person develop creative values. Clinebell believed, based on the research of Abraham Maslow, that humans have a need for the values of truth, goodness, beauty, wholeness, justice, playfulness, meaning-

fulness, etc. (Clinebell, 1979:118). These values help individuals avoid illness and achieve their full potential. Lack of these creative values in human life can engender anomie, alienation, axiological depression, meaninglessness, loss of zest for life, hopelessness, and boredom (Clinebell, 1979:118).

An energizing relationship with a loving God is a facet of salugenic religion. "The heart of spiritual growth-work is opening oneself more fully to the vital energy which is the creative Spirit of the universe" (Clinebell, 1979:120). This spiritual energy helps the individual live each day knowing that he is loved by a Divine presence.

Salugenic religion helps the person develop his or her soul. The soul or higher self, Clinebell believed, helps the person develop the ontological basis for self-worth. This experience of self-worth was the basis for developing relationships with other people and events (Clinebell, 1979: 123).

Salugenic religion helps the person develop his or her sense of belonging with others and with the universe. This religious experience includes a "...sense of organic interrelatedness [which] is potentially with the whole biosphere" (Clinebell, 1979:124). Clinebell saw that humans were interconnected in a network of minds and spirits. This network is centered in the Spirit, or God, of the universe. Through this interrelatedness the person can develop his or her identity as one who belongs with God and His creation.

Peak or transpersonal experiences are part of salugenic religion. These experiences are life-validating "...in that they make life worthwhile and heal the splits within and among persons and between the person and the world" (Clinebell, 1979:124). Peak experiences enable the person to gain new insight into his or her life and the nature of the universe. The insights gained from peak experiences enable the person to grow through reawakening the sense of at-homeness in the world and the universe.

Salugenic religion helps persons develop relationships with groups committed to spiritual growth. Through these groups a person can develop his or her spiritual life and renew his or her relationship with God (Clinebell, 1979: 125-126). Through these groups new relationships can develop which the person can experience as a deep bond with others. These relationships encourage further growth in all areas of life (Clinebell, 1981:17).

Salugenic religion is the "...enhancement of one's values, meanings, 'peak experiences,' and relationship with God" (Clinebell, 1981:17). Its basic tenets enable one to enter in to relationships with the six dimensions of growth and relate growth in one area to the other five areas. Salugenic religion determines the quality of these relationships and therefore the type and rapidity of growth. For this reason Clinebell determined that spiritual growth was the key to all human growth (Clinebell, 1979:109-110).

Salugenic religion enables the person to integrate growth through out each dimension of his life; however, it does not produce growth. Clinebell believed that growth occurred in the tension produced through being confronted in an open and honest manner within a caring relationship (Clinebell, 1979:55). He defined a caring relationship as one in which one did not have to earn acceptance, affirmation, grace, or love. Confrontation is the moment when a person truthfully examines those aspects of reality that are being ignored or denied by the individual. Clinebell developed the growth formula of GROWTH = CARING + CONFRONTATION to express his concept of growth development. In order for humans to reach their potential they must be confronted with those aspects of their lives which limit growth and the positive potentials for change of which they may be unaware (Clinebell, 1979:55). This type of confrontation leads the individual to self-confrontation through which the individual makes changes in his or her life. It is only when the individual confronts him or her self that permanent change takes place. Growth can only take place when the person decides to grow.

Spiritual reading was not a topic discussed by Clinebell. His growth formula can give insight into how reading can produce growth in an individual. Individuals are confronted through literature of aspects of life which limit their growth in ways of which they may be unaware. If the individual believes that he or she is in a positive, loving,

and affirming relationship with another person or a God who cares, then they have the freedom to confront themselves and make the decision to change. When they make this change in their lives it impacts in each area of life. If the literature is spiritual in nature, it impacts on the relationship with God. As the person grows in his or her relationship with God through reading and making needed changes, then change occurs in each dimension of the individual's personality. As the person develops his religious values he or she also develops the ability to integrate growth in other dimensions of life in each of the six dimensions.

The Clinebell Growth Counseling theory could be viewed as a Judeo-Christian understanding of the work of Maslow and Carl Rogers. Growth Counseling incorporates many of their insights into understanding human personality. The strength of Growth Counseling is that it incorporates many of the insights of the human potentials movement with a Biblical view of humankind. It describes how a positive religious belief system is essential for human growth. His work unites many of the insights of the behavioral sciences with traditional religious beliefs. The Clinebell Growth Formula is a tool which can be used to describe how growth occurs in many relationships, including the relationship between a reader and spiritual literature.

Lectio Divina as the Foundation for Spiritual Reading

Lectio Divina, literally divine reading, has a long tradition in the Christian church. Lectio Divina is a prac-

tice of reading Holy Scripture as an inspired message from God. It is a special way of reading in faith, attentiveness, and self-surrender. The purpose of lectio divina is to develop insight between the reader and his or her relationship with God (Keating, 1981:43). The goal of this reading is to bring the person into a loving relationship with God (A Monk of New Clairvaux, 1979:115).

It is the emphasis on developing a relationship with God which separates lectio divina from other types of reading. Lectio divina is not conducted using the methods of exegesis or a historical-critical research. The Monk of New Clairvaux stated that reading using these methods produces an I-it relationship with the material which is purely intellectual and may be limited to an accumulation of facts. These methods involve analysis and distinction which may or may not lead to a synthesis of uniting the self with a loving God. Further, these methods use the text and produce a process of critical, systematic inquiry which demands verification judgement regarding truth (A Monk of New Clairvaux, 1979:136).

Lectio divina is an I-Thou relationship which communicates a loving relationship between friends. As a form of prayer it engages feelings as well as the intellect and works to transform every area of personality. The goal of lectio divina is the reconciliation of the reader with God through forgiveness and healing. The reader is moved toward a union and a bonding with God, who helps the reader to become one

in spirit with Him. Lectio divina is a non-critical reading which works for the cultivation of openness and surrender to Truth and Love (A Monk of New Clairvaux, 1979:136). It is a relationship of love/prayer/communion between the reader and God (A Monk of New Clairvaux, 1979:115).

Lectio divina was formulated in the monastic culture of the Benedictin-Cistercial tradition (Leclercq, 1982:15). St Benedict outlined set times of reading Holy Scripture concentrating on reciting the Psalms. He stated in the Rule that during Lent "...each monk shall receive a book from the library, which he should read carefully cover to cover" (St. Benedict, 1975:87). His goal was to read Holy Scripture with literature which could help the reader integrate the insights of Holy Scripture into the life of the reader. The tradition of reading both Holy Scripture and other books which explain the message of salvation, sacred doctrine, and theology developed by St. Benedict set the content of what is considered spiritual literature.

Lectio divina consists of four phases of reading and response to the reading. These phases are lectio, meditato, oratio, and contemplatio (Michael and Norrisey, 1984:31). The first phase of lectio divina is the actual reading (lectio) of the chosen Biblical passage or work of a spiritual master. The reader is encouraged to choose a quiet place, to sit in a relaxed and restful position, to develop an attitude of prayer, and when one begins to feel quieted, to begin to read the chosen passage. The goal of this reading

is to place one's self in a position so that he or she can encounter a loving God through the text. The reader reads for insight into his or her relationship with God. The reader is encouraged to read for a quality of experience, not a quantity of verses or pages read (A Monk of New Clairvaux, 1979:125).

Meditatio is the attempt by the reader to develop an understanding of the full meaning of the text. This engagement between the reader and text is often referred to as pondering, reflecting, considering, ruminating, remembering, and associating (A Monk of New Clairvaux, 1979:138-139). Two methods of helping the reader gain an understanding how to apply the text to his or her life are most often recommended. The first method asks the reader to imagine that the text is being written just for him or her in his or her life situation. The second asks the reader to project his or her self into the situation the text is describing (Michael and Norrisey, 1984:32). The purpose of both these methods is to assist the reader in engaging the text so that he or she can be united with God through the development of attitudes and convictions which will help the person find God.

Oratio is to help the reader apply the test to his or her life. Michael and Norrisey stated that oratio engages the reader to:

> ...decide what changes we want to make in our life as a result of the truth of God that has been revealed to us. At this time we decide whether we will incorporate the Word of God into our heart, our life, and

> our work or whether we will rationalize a rejection of its efficacy for us (Michael and Norrisey, 1984:34).

The goal of oratio is to draw the reader into a deeper understanding of the text so that it can be interiorized by the reader (A Monk of New Clairvaux, 1979:140-141; Leclercq, 1982:79).

The fourth phase of lectio divina is contemplatio, a time of quiet and of listening for the voice of God. Through this silence the reader has an opportunity to move toward a state of prayer in which he or she can encounter God. This phase is a mysticism of light where the person can experience the love and transformation of God (A Monk of New Clairvaux, 1979:151).

The Monk of New Clairvaux developed a ten step methodology to help the reader through the four phases of lectio divina. These ten steps are as follows:

1. Choose a quiet place where you can go each day and read the Scripture selections which most appeal to you.
2. Sit in a relaxed and restful position and keep a notebook nearby.
3. Begin with some form of a breathing or relaxing exercise.
4. When you feel somewhat centered and quieted, begin to read the chosen passage.
5. Read in a manner which most helps you engage the text and make it meaningful for you (e.g., reading aloud).
6. Keep in the periphery of your mind that you are reading in order to meet God through the text.
7. Read slowly, pause over a sentence or clause which has meaning for you.
8. Try to apply the text to your life.
9. When you finish attempting to apply the text to your life, return to reading the text.
10. When you finish, close with a spontaneous prayer of gratitude to God for His Scriptures and His relationship with you (A Monk of New Clairvaux, 1979:125-126).

The purpose of these ten steps is to guide the reader in his or her quest to meet God and learn of His love.

Other writers on lectio divina ask the reader to use the lectionary in choosing what passages of Holy Scripture to read. The daily lectionary introduces the reader to lessons from the Old Testament, the Psalms, the epistles, and the Gospels. Through the use of the daily lectionary the reader is introduced in a two or three year cycle to almost all the Bible. The use of the lectionary ensures that the reader does not limit his or her reading to a few selected texts. The reader is also in a form of communion with other readers who are reading the same texts and this relationship is felt to support the reader in his discipline of lectio divina (Br. Ramon, 1985:105-106).

Lectio divina is the foundation of all spiritual reading. The goal of this form of spiritual reading is to bring the reader into a relationship with God and to help the reader examine the nature of his or her relationship with God. The text the reader chooses can be from Holy Scripture or from a book which helps explain scriptural themes. When the reader practices of the four phases of lectio, meditato, oratio and contemplatio found in lectio divina the Word of God is examined and integrated into his or her life. Growth comes from the reader's self-examination and decision to integrate the message of the text into his or her life.

Reading in the Practice of Centered Living

Centered living is the application of Centering Prayer to everyday life (Pennington, 1986:10). The goal of Cen-

tered Living through Centered Prayer is to develop a loving relationship between the believer and God (Pennington, 1988: 18). Fr. M. Basil Pennington believed that daily reading helped one develop a relationship with God through building faith in the believer (Pennington, 1977:23). He believed that the reader in sacred reading could "...take up the text when and where I will, to move along at my own pace, to take all the time I want to savor the Word, to let it resound within me and respond to it...." (Pennington, 1977:27). Pennington delineated four kinds of faith building reading: sacred study, dialogical reading, occasional reading, and lectio divina (Pennington, 1977:27-35).

Sacred study is the study of Holy Scripture, theology, church history, and other subjects which bear on understanding the Word of God. Sacred study is the attempt by the reader to understand how God has worked with His creation in the past and to attempt to understand how God may still be working with his people today (Pennington, 1977:30). Pennington recommended a weekly period of sacred study.

Dialogical reading is a form of reflective reading or meditative reading. The goal of this reading is to hear the voice of God through what is being read. The reader is more of a listener than reader (Pennington, 1977:31).

Occasional Reading is dialogical reading on a specific topic. The reader would choose a theme on a subject with which he or she was having trouble or a theme on a season of the Church year to attempt to listen to the voice of God

and His will for him or her (Pennington, 1977:32-33). Pennington combined dialogical reading and occasional reading into a type of reading he called motivational reading. He believed that this type of reading strengthened the will in its practice of centering prayer (Pennington, 1980:2).

Pennington's concept of lectio divina is more of a passive reading of scripture than a formal method of lectio, meditatio, oratio, and contemplatio. The goal of this reading is to open up the reader to the Word of God. Pennington believed this type of reading had the ability to quiet, to purify, and to prepare the way for a union with God (Pennington, 1977:34).

Pennington combined the above forms of sacred reading into his version of lectio divina. This method was developed for the reading of Holy Scripture, but can be applied to any kind of sacred reading (Pennington, 1980:2). The three rules for the practice of lectio divina are:

1. Take the Sacred Text with reverence, acknowledging God's Presence, and call upon the Holy Spirit.
2. For ten minutes listen to the Lord and respond to Him.
3. Thank the Lord and take a "word" with you (Pennington, 1980:199).

The purpose of this reading is to quiet the reader so that he or she can hear the voice of God and then move into the practice of Centering Prayer.

Pennington believed that the person was transformed when he or she became conscious that God dwelled in them with a creative love. This consciousness transforms the person so that he or she will want to reflect this love in

each area of his or her life. Spiritual reading and Centering Prayer bring about the knowledge of this creative love of God within persons. Spiritual reading can develop the knowledge of how to apply this love in everyday situations (Pennington, 1980:87-89).

Spiritual Reading as a Spiritual Discipline

Dr. M. Robert Mulholland, of Asbury Theological Seminary, believed that spiritual reading must be understood in the context of Christian spiritual formation. He stated that this formation is a three step process (Mulholland, 1985:109). Human nature builds and maintains a complex set of structures in relating to the world. These habits, attitudes, and perceptions help the person in daily activities. They can become so ingrained that they prevent the person from experiencing new human relationships and, more importantly for the Christian, a relationship with God. This "crust" can center the person solely on his or her self to the extent that the individual fails to acknowledge anything except his or her own wants and desires (Mulholland, 1985:110-111). This self-centeredness is seen as the result of original sin.

For the follower of Christ there is a need to overcome the effects of sin, to break the crust of self-centeredness, and to love God and God's creation. He or she must "...renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. Anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it" (Mt. 16:24-25).

The chief end of man is to identify himself or herself with God which entails the breaking of the "crust" of self protection to be transformed through a relationship with God.

Spiritual disciplines help the follower of Christ break through this "crust" of self-centeredness. A spiritual discipline can be anything which is offered to God in order that it can be used by God as a means to bring about a transformation of the follower (Mulholland, 1985:112). It is done solely out of a love for God without thought of any gain except to follow the will of God. It may bring about a change in the person practicing the discipline, but the purpose is not one of personal change or growth except that of loving God more.

When the seeker works on breaking the crust of self-centeredness and develops a spiritual discipline he or she is ready to begin to grow into wholeness. This growth occurs when the follower of Christ uses the spiritual discipline to gain insight into the incongruity of his or her present life and the image of the Christian life the seeker maintains. The follower of Christ will then make the desired change in order to bring his or her life in line with the image of the Christian life (Mulholland, 1985:116-117).

Mulholland believed that reading helped the Christian develop both the insight and the discipline to break the "crust" of self-centeredness and protection. Mulholland limited his understanding of spiritual reading to Holy

Scripture and his method to one developed by John Wesley (Mulholland, 1985:122-123). Wesley recommended that the early Methodists read one chapter of the Old Testament and one chapter of the New Testament each day and that the reader should "...frequently to pause and examine ourselves by what we read, both with regard to our hearts and lives" (Wesley, 1987:20).

Mulholland expanded the Wesley guidelines of reading Holy Scripture as a spiritual discipline in three aspects: the attitude of the reader toward self, the Bible and existence. He claimed the formational and relational dynamics employed in the reading will affect how the "crust" is broken (Mulholland, 1985:140).

Encounter is the second aspect of reading Holy Scripture. Mulholland believed that there were four techniques for encountering God. Each of these techniques included a phase of reading and hearing or meditating. The first technique is one of reading and meditating on what one has read. This method is similar to lectio divina. The Harmony-Dissonance Technique is one where the reader returns to a section of Holy Scripture where he or she felt the most harmony or dissonance and attempts to determine why that passage caused those feelings. The Imagination Technique has the person imagine that he or she is part of the scene and is a participant in the story. The "If-You-Were-There" Technique has the person ask him or her self what he or she would have done in the same situation described by

the passage. Each of these techniques attempts to draw the reader into an encounter with Holy Scripture (Mulholland, 1985:144-150).

The third aspect of the Mulholland expansion of the Wesley method of spiritual reading is one of response. "An encounter with the living Word of God calls for our response ...The address by God calls for a response in the daily dynamics of our being and doing" (Mulholland, 1985:151). The reader must make some type of change in his or her life through the reading.

Mulholland believed that there were obstacles to spiritual reading. Perceptual obstacles of the self-image, of his or her perception of reading, view of the Bible, and view of existence can affect how the reader interacts with Holy Scripture. Experiential obstacles to spiritual reading are those which emphasize the completing one's own agenda (e.g., reading the whole Bible in a year) and the belief that the reading in and of itself will bring about transformation. Lack of attention to what is being read, the need to maintain preconceived views of Holy Scripture, and inconsistency of reading are other obstacles to encountering God through spiritual reading (Mulholland, 1985: 129-136).

The goal of spiritual reading for Mulholland is the transformation of the reader by God to do His will (Mulholland, 1985:18). The reader is shaped by Holy Scripture through his or her ability to change his or her life and

bring that life into what the reader perceives to be the image of God. This change is accomplished through the reader discovering those areas which may hinder his or her relationship with God and then making needed changes in his or her life to develop that relationship.

Formational Reading

Formational spirituality is an understanding of human growth and development formulated by Drs. Adrian van Kaam and Susan Muto at Duquesne University. They believed that humans are always in some stage of formation. The development depends on how he or she "...allow [themselves] to receive forms or impressions from others on a daily basis" (van Kaam and Muto, 1989:27). They felt that the humankind spiritual nature is what makes persons distinctively human. They stated:

> ...to give form to a distinctively human life, we should, therefore, order and discipline our thoughts, feelings, and imaginations, our options, decisions, and actions, in the light of our human spirit and its unique powers of cognition and affection (van Kaam and Muto, 1989:28).

They believed that through following a religious tradition God has the ability to transform humans to a level which transcends bodily and functional life (van Kaam and Muto, 1989:29).

Dr. Muto believed that reading spiritual literature has the ability to discipline the life of the reader so that he or she can develop his or her spiritual life. She stated that formational reading is "...being receptive to those directives in the text that touch our heart and evoke inner

longings to receive God's word as the center of our life" (Muto, 1984:65-66). The goal of formational reading is to help the reader hear and respond to the word of God in his or her daily life (Muto, 1984:80). The reading of spiritual literature is to help the reader explore his or her inner-life and that part of the spiritual self which may be hidden from the reader so that the reader can come into a relationship with God (Muto, 1973:13).

Dr. Muto stated there are three types of reading in order to help the religious life. The first is reading as preparation for meditation. Reading for meditation is a reading done in order to place oneself in the presence of God. This reading is usually a short passage of Holy Scripture on the theme or topic the reader wishes to meditate about (Muto, 1973:15). Meditative reading is a form of meditation in which the text the reader wishes to meditate on is kept in sight. The reader then alternates between reading and reflecting about what is stated in the passage he or she is reading and the life of the reader (Muto, 1973: 16). Spiritual reading is done outside of meditative reading or meditation. Its goal is to enable the reader to meet God through the daily events of life (Muto, 1973:17). In each of these forms of spiritual reading the goal of the reading is not to gather information but to develop a relationship with God.

Dr. Muto believed that the texts for spiritual reading must include Holy Scriptures and those texts from the

spiritual faith tradition of the reader (Muto, 1976:12). Choosing these texts enables the reader to develop within the framework of his or her faith tradition. While other literature may provide spiritual insight and growth, these passages may lead the reader to ideas and concepts which may not be part of his or her faith tradition (Muto, 1988: personal communication). Also, reading the traditional spiritual texts enables the reader to critically judge contemporary sources and their understanding of the spiritual life (Muto, 1976:18-19). The actual selection of texts, therefore, would be different for persons of different religious or denominational backgrounds.

Dr. Muto believed that spiritual reading is an art which the reader must develop in order to reach the goal of a better relationship with God. The reader must develop an attitude of dwelling on a few passages of the text until he or she has gained insight into the text and how it applies to his or her life. The spiritual reader reads with an attitude of receptivity and a yielding to the Holy Ghost. The spiritual reader has a goal which is the application of the text to his or her current life (Muto, 1976:19-21).

A third guideline for spiritual reading is that the reader establish certain conditions to facilitate this discipline. In order to form his or her life the reader must establish the time and space for the reading (Muto, 1976: 21-22). The reader must also develop the will to stick to the practice of spiritual reading (Muto, 1976:24). The

reader must actively read the text. Active reading includes marking the text so the reader can recall what his or her thoughts were when the text was first read. This helps the reader gain insight into his or her growth and development (Muto, 1976:25).

A fourth guideline for spiritual reading recommended by Dr. Muto is the keeping of a spiritual reading notebook. This notebook or journal is helpful because it enables the reader to examine his progress in the spiritual life. It enables the reader to discern a pattern of problems in his or her life which may not be seen in daily life. Through regular journal keeping the reader becomes his or her own spiritual director (Muto, 1979:31-33).

The fifth guideline for spiritual reading is for the reader to join with other readers in discussing the spiritual text. This helps each of the readers to gain insight into his or her relationship with God through dialogue with others. While the responsibility for spiritual growth remains with the reader, the reader can develop new ideas of how God may be working in his or her life (Muto, 1976: 33-34).

There are many obstacles for the reader in his or her reading to grow in his or her relationship with God. The first obstacle is that the reader becomes unable to separate the text from the historical context in which it was written. The reader fails to discern the timeless truth from the timebound element of the author (Muto, 176:36-37).

A second obstacle the reader must overcome is the aesthetic resistance to the literary form the writer uses to express his message (Muto, 1976:38). The attempts of the reader to guess the outcome of the passage may affect the ability of the reader to apply the passage to his or her relationship with God (Muto, 1976:38). A fourth obstacle to spiritual reading is that the reader may become critical of his or her spiritual life so that he or she may develop an attitude of non-acceptance of his/her limited self. This attitude can cause the person to give up on spiritual reading and the seeking of God altogether (Muto, 1976:39-40). Discouragement due to a perceived slow growth in the spiritual life can also be a obstacle to spiritual reading.

Dr. Muto believed that spiritual reading can help persons reach true eternal happiness with God (Muto, 1977:207). This reading enables the reader to gain an understanding of his or her inner life and his relationship with God. Through this spiritual development the person has the ability to become his or her true self.

Analysis of Spiritual Reading

The goal of all forms of spiritual reading is to better the relationship of the reader with God. Other growth may occur due to the improved relationship with God of the reader, however, this is seen as secondary and as evidence of the improved relationship with God. This reading is seen as an "I-Thou" relationship with a God who is present with the reader through the Holy Ghost. Spiritual reading

is thought to be a dialogue between the reader, the literature, and the Holy Ghost so the reader can come into a relationship based on love and truth. Spiritual reading is never described as academic study or informational reading. It is always described as a slow, reflective reading where the reader examines his or her life before God.

Spiritual reading promotes growth with God through the reader developing an understanding of his or her present life as it relates to the life God has outlined in Holy Scripture and the authors of the Christian spiritual tradition. The reader must then make the decision to change his or her life and attempt to conform it with the life the reader thinks God wishes it to be. It is the will of the reader which produces his or her growth and development through reading spiritual literature. Theologically, the help of God through the Holy Ghost assists the reader in making the needed changes, but the reader has the ability to make, or not to make, changes in his or her life. Spiritual reading assists the reader to see his or her life in relationship with God and may give insight in how the reader can make the desired changes, but the actual changes must be made by the reader.

Writers on spiritual reading agree on most points, but disagree in three areas. The first disagreement is the number of types of spiritual reading. The second area of disagreement is whether literature other than Holy Scripture can be considered spiritual reading. The third disagreement

concerns the methods used to read spiritually. Differences between reading methods are for the most part a variation of similar principles and are not that great.

Spiritual Reading and Growth Counseling

Howard Clinebell does not refer to growth being produced through reading. Growth Counseling can, however, help the behavioral scientist understand as an educational or psychological process how growth occurs through spiritual reading. The growth formula may explain how the reader is able to make life changes when confronted with the juxtaposition of his or her life and his or her image of the plan of God for his or her life. The growth dimension typology and the categories of salugenic religion can aid the research in determining the areas of which growth has occurred.

The major differences between the writers on spiritual reading and Howard Clinebell is the goal of growth. The goal of spiritual reading is a better relationship with God. The goal of Growth Counseling is the enablement of humans to reach their full potential. Spiritual growth may be a key to full human growth, but it is not the final goal of Growth Counseling.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the related research and literature consulted to formulate the research problem outlined in Chapter I. From this chapter it can be determined that research has not been conducted on how spiritual reading

has helped persons grow in their relationship with God using the insights of Growth Counseling.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The goals and objectives of this research study were fourfold. The first objective was to develop a list of literature the respondents found helpful in their growth. The second objective was to determine if the literature the respondents found helpful in their spiritual development was written by a spiritual master. The third objective of this study was to determine the methods which pastors employed while reading spiritual literature. The fourth objective of this research was to determine in what way the respondents grew from reading spiritual literature. This chapter will outline the methodology used in collecting and analyzing data to meet the goals and objectives of this study.

Research Strategy

Descriptive research was the foundational strategy for this study. The strategy is described as one that has the "...main objective the accurate portrayal of the characteristics of persons, situations, or groups, and the frequency with which certain phenomena occur" (Polit and Hungler, 1983:613). This strategy was chosen because of the lack of research in the area of spiritual reading and human growth.

This study was also limited to an ex post facto analysis because the reading and growth of the subjects had already occurred.

Research Design

The research design used in this research study was a non-experimental field survey. Bordens and Abbott described this design as one which directly asks questions about behavior, attitudes, beliefs, and intentions of those being surveyed. There is no manipulation of independent variables (Bordens and Abbott, 1988:170). This design was chosen because of the lack of research data in the area of spiritual reading and human growth.

In order to answer the five Analytical Questions posted in Chapter I, three open-ended item questions were developed. These questions were as follows:

1. Other than Holy Scripture, what one piece of literature have you read which has most helped you in your relationship with God?
2. Describe how this piece of literature helped you grow in your relationship with God, including what changes you made in your behavior and insight gained.
3. When you read for spiritual growth, do you have any special methods, rituals, or techniques which you use?

Open-ended item questions were developed so that the subjects could respond in their own words. These three ques-

tions were chosen so the respondent could describe his or her experience of growth through spiritual reading that close-ended item questions might not elicit.

Demographic questions were also developed. These included the denomination, age, sex, racial status, years in full-time ministry, educational level, and ordination status of the respondents. These questions were included to determine if these factors affected the type of literature read and the growth produced. The demographic questions and the three open-ended item questions were combined to form the Spiritual Reading Guided Interview Checklist (SRGIC).

Ten persons representing the expected age, sex, educational level, and experience in religious work of the target population were asked to read the Spiritual Reading Guided Interview Checklist. They were asked by the researcher to describe to what the questions related. Also, these persons were asked if they had trouble in understanding the questions and if they could provide the answers each question asked. The feedback received from these interviews was incorporated into the final SRGIC.

The structured interview method of administering the SRGIC was selected. The interview is a "...method of data collecting in which one person (an interviewer) asks questions of another person (a respondent)...." (Polit and Hungler, 1983:616). This method provided the flexibility to ask the questions of the SRGIC and in-depth questions

arising from the interview which could lead to greater understanding of spiritual reading and human growth. Problems associated with researcher bias in the interview method were deemed minimal due to the training in oral history and the supervision the researcher has received in counseling methods.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with eight pastors in the Norfolk, Virginia area. These pastors were selected because of their similarities with the target population. Each pastor was telephoned by the researcher who described himself as a doctoral student conducting research in what pastors have read which helped them grow in their relationship with God. The pastors were then asked by the researcher if they would like to be a part of this study. If they agreed to participate in the study, a time and place was determined for the interview. Attempts were made to conduct the interview in the office of the subject.

Before the interview each subject was informed that his or her name would not be used and that the interview could be terminated at any time. The researcher then asked the subject the questions on the SRGIC. The researcher then worte the answer of the subject on a form prepared for the interview. At the end of the interview the researcher reviewed the answers with the subject for accuracy. Upon completion of the interview the subjects were told the nature and goals of the research and asked if they had any

questions regarding the content of the SRGIC or of the interview, at which time they were thanked for their participation in the study.

The results of the pilot study indicated that the SRGIC was a valid research tool. Subjects in this study appeared to have no difficulty in providing the required data. This time was also used by the researcher to develop the interview skills needed to collect the data in the main study.

Sources of Information

In selecting the sample, the availability, and accessibility of the subjects were considered. The target population for the study was pastors in the Tidewater area of Virginia. Three groups of pastors were contacted and asked to participate in this research study. The first group were pastors known by the researcher through professional organizations. These pastors were contacted by the researcher and asked to participate in the study. The second group of pastors contacted came from recommendations from the first group of pastors. Pastors interviewed in this group were contacted by the recommending pastor and, if they agreed to participate in the study, their name and phone number was given to the researcher. The third group of subjects were selected by two clerical workers who were asked to pick forty church names and telephone numbers from the local telephone directory. These were placed in a random order by the clerical workers. The researcher then called the churches in the order provided by the clerical

workers and asked to speak with the pastor. The researcher explained the nature of the research to the pastor and then asked him or her if he/she would be willing to participate in the study. If he or she agreed, a time and place was determined for the interview. The above process was utilized until thirty interviews were completed.

Main Study

After the pilot study was completed, revisions were made to the SRGIC and the actual research study was begun. Using the procedures developed during the pilot study, thirty pastors were interviewed about the literature which helped them in their relationship with God, how they grew from reading such literature, and their reading habits. In each case the subjects were informed at the beginning of each interview that their names would not be used in the study and that they could terminate the interview at any time they wished. The researcher recorded their answers on an interview sheet prepared for each interview. At the end of the interview the answers recorded were shown to the subject for verification of accuracy. Each pastor was then told the intent and goals of the research and asked if he or she had any questions regarding the content of the interview or the goals of the research. Also, they were asked if the researcher had any questions about their answers at a later time if they would be willing to clarify them.

Processes Employed in Analyzing the Data

The processes employed in analyzing the data collected in the main study centered in describing the literature the pastors read, the growth produced from their reading, and the methods the pastors used to read spiritual literature. First, a list of the literature the pastors read was compiled from the interview data sheets. This list was broken into categories describing literature type (spiritual masters, fiction, hymns, works of theology, etc). The literature recorded on this list was then compared with a list of spiritual masters compiled from the research of Cox, Merton, and Muto (Cox, 1985:9011; Merton, 1951:319-335; Muto, 1973:165-174) to determine if the subjects had read any of the spiritual masters. Appendix A contains the list of spiritual masters prepared for this research study.

The growth reported by the pastors was analyzed using the Clinebell six dimensions of growth. Each report of growth was categorized as to whether it was growth of the mind, growth of the body, growth in developing relationships, growth in developing a relationship with the biosphere, growth in relations with organizations and institutions, or growth in the spiritual life. A further analysis was conducted on growth in the spiritual life using the Clinebell criteria for salugenic religion.

The analysis of reading methods was conducted according to the reading typology developed by Pennington (Pennington, 1979:27-35). The four types of reading are: sacred study,

dialogical reading, occasional reading, and lectio divina. This typology was chosen over that of Muto because of the difference between dialogical reading and occasional reading.

Conclusion

The research strategy for this study was descriptive in nature using a non-experimental field study for the collection of data. This design was chosen because of the exploratory nature of this study. The data gathered from the pastors' interviews was analyzed in a three step process. The first was to determine if the pastors had read anything which had helped them in their relationship with God and if the literature read was by a spiritual master. The second analysis of the data determined if the pastor felt he or she had grown from this reading and how that growth affected his or her life using the insights of Growth Counseling. The third analysis was conducted to determine of any type of reading method was used based on a spiritual reading typology developed by Pennington. The results of this analysis will be presented in Chapter IV and implications for practice will be presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

This research study sought to explore the relationship between spiritual reading and its effects on human growth. This chapter will report and analyze the data gathered from the subjects interviewed for this study. The emphasis of this chapter is the description of how the pastors felt they had grown in their relationship with God through reading.

Demographic Data

The target population for this study was thirty pastors in the Tidewater, Virginia area. Table 1 lists the eighteen denominations of the pastors who participated in this study. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Tables 2 through 5. The age range of the subjects was 25 to 62 years old with a median age of 45.23 years old. Three female and 27 male pastors were interviewed. Twenty-seven of the pastors were Caucasian, two were African-American, and one was Asian. The number of years in full-time ministry ranged from zero by four respondents to 38 years in ministry. The median number of years in full-time ministry was 15.5. The educational level included one pastor having a high school diploma, two pastors having some college, one pastor was a college graduate, fifteen pastors

TABLE 1

DENOMINATIONAL REPRESENTATION
OF RESPONDENTS

Denomination	Number	Percentage
American Baptist	1	3.3%
Assemblies of God	1	3.3%
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	2	6.6%
Church of Christ	1	3.3%
Church of Christ Scientist	1	3.3%
Church of God in Christ	1	3.3%
Episcopal Church	4	13.5%
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	1	3.3%
Inter-Denominational	1	3.3%
National Baptist Convention	1	3.3%
Plymouth Brethren	1	3.3%
Presbyterian Church of the USA	1	3.3%
Roman Catholic	4	13.5%
Southern Baptist Convention	3	10.0%
United Church in Christ	1	3.3%
United Methodist Church	4	13.5%
United Reformed Church	1	3.3%
Total	30	100.0%

had completed their first seminary degree (BD/M Div), nine pastors had their seminary degree with another masters degree, and two pastors had completed Doctor of Ministry degrees. Twenty-six of the pastors held the highest ordination of their denomination. Two of the respondents were members of denominations who did not formally ordain its religious workers (Church of Christ Science and Inter-Denominational). Two subjects were students preparing for ordination and were in some kind of parish ministry under the sponsorship of their church. All the respondents stated that they had read some form of literature which had helped them in their relationship with God.

The demographic data indicated that each of the respondents had been exposed to a piece of literature which had helped them grow in their relationship with God. Eighty-six percent of the respondents had completed seminary. This factor was deemed important by the researcher because it could be assumed that most of the respondents had been exposed to the spiritual masters and spiritual literature. Another factor deemed important by the researcher was the number of years in full-time ministry. The pressure of preparing a weekly sermon and answering parishioners questions may have led many of the pastors to look for sermon material and answers for questions through literature.

TABLE 2

AGE AND SEX OF THE RESPONDENTS

Respondents' Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Age		
Range	25-62	-
Mean	45.23	-
Sex		
Female	3	10.0%
Male	27	90.0%
Total	30	100.0%

Presentation of Data

Each of the pastors surveyed could relate a piece of literature which had helped him/her in his/her relationship with God. The thirty pieces of literature were divided into ten categories: spiritual living (six pieces of literature), theology (six pieces of literature), biography (three pieces of literature), worship resources (three pieces of

TABLE 3

RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Respondents' Characteristics	Number	Percentage
African-American	2	6.7%
Asian	1	3.3%
Caucasian	27	90.0%
Total	30	100.0%

literature), psychological studies (three pieces of literature), spiritual direction (three pieces of literature), the spiritual masters (two pieces of literature), Biblical commentaries (one piece of literature), fiction (one piece of literature), and two pieces of literature could not be categorized. Table 6 lists the literature the pastors gave as helping them in their relationship with God.

TABLE 4

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS

Respondents' Characteristics	Number	Percentage
High School Diploma	1	3.3%
Some College	2	6.7%
College Degree	1	3.3%
Seminary Degree (BD/MDiv)	15	50.0%
Seminary Degree with second Masters degree	9	30.0%
Doctoral Degree (DMin)	2	6.7%
Total	30	100.0%

TABLE 5

RESPONDENTS YEARS IN MINISTRY

Respondents' Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Range	0-38	-
Mean	15.5	-

The six pastors who stated that literature related to spiritual living helped them grow in their relationship with God grew in four different ways. The six pieces of literature related to spiritual living are: As a Man Thinketh by James Allen, My Upmost for this Highest by Oswald Chambers, Holiness of God by R. C. Spoul, The Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23 by Phillip Keller, Improving Your Serve by Charles Swindoll, and Its Him Again (author unknown).

Two pastors stated that the literature they read helped them begin to love other people and develop positive relationships. An Inter-denominational pastor stated that "...I began to see that I come second. As I became less self-centered I found that people were more interesting and that I could relate to them better."

Two pastors felt that reading spiritual living literature helped them to grow in their relationship with God. Commenting on Holiness of God by R. C. Sproul, one pastor stated that it moved him to a state of prayer and a deeper feeling that he was loved by God. The other pastor stated that the book, My Upmost for His Highest by Oswald Chambers led him into new insight in how he related to God and to others. Both pastors felt that these books gave insight that they would not have found in any other source at the time they were reading.

One pastor felt that As a Man Thinketh by James Allen helped him adapt to the changes of his life. He stated

> I began as an unskilled farm hand. I worked my way up through college, a stint in the Marine Corps, and

TABLE 6

LITERATURE THE RESPONDENTS FOUND
HELPFUL IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

(Listed by Author)

Literature	Author (if known)
The Imitation of Christ	Thomas a Kempis
As a Man Thinketh	James Allen
Codependent No More	Melody Beattie
My Upmost for His Highest	Oswald Chambers
Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures	Mary Baker Eddy
Bill Wallace of China	Jessy C. Fletcher
Celebration of Discipline	Richard Foster
Christian Doctrine	S. Gruthie
Please Understand Me	David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates
The Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23	Phillip Keller
Spiritual Direction	Kenneth Leach
Problem of Pain	C. S. Lewis
Theories of Personality	Hal Lindzey
"The old Methodist Book of Hymns"	Methodist Church
The Seven Story Mountain	Thomas Merton
Pathways of Spiritual Living	Susan A. Muto
Moody	John C. Pollock
Book of Common Prayer (1928)	Prayer Book Committee
The Lost Shepherd	Angus Sanford
Holiness of God	R. C. Spoul
Improving Your Serve	Charles Swindoll
Trouble with the Church	Helmut Thielicke
Systematic Theology (3 volumes)	Paul Tillich
Crossways	Harry Wendt
Ever Increasing Faith	Smith Wiggleworth
It's Him Again	Unknown
Plains Indian Mythology	Unknown
Pulpit Commentary	Unknown
Second Vatican Council Documents	Unknown
Book Unknown	Unknown

> and now as a pastor. This book helped me to see that life was more of what I thought of it, rather than what might be the reality of the situation. Life was what I made of it.

He further reflec' d that this book helped him integrate his faith with li

The book It's Him Again, helped one Disciple of Christ pastor see the working of God in his life. This pastor felt that he was always seeking the will of God in his life before making any decision. When he did not feel a leading by God to make a decision he would become frustrated and develop the feeling that he was not following a Christian life. This book helped him see the working of God in his life through everyday events. This knowledge helped him develop a closer relationship with God and change his self-image.

Six pastors stated that literature related to theology helped them grow in their relationship with God. The six books these pastors reported were: Christian Doctrine by S. Gruthie, Problem of Pain by C. S. Lewis, Trouble With the Church by Helmut Thielicke, Systematic Theology by Paul Tillich, Crossways by Harry Wendt, and the Second Vatican Council Documents.

Three of the pastors who reported that a book related to theology had helped them in their relationship with God stated that the book helped them understand the Christian faith. The use of language by the Gruthie book (Christian Doctrine) helped one Presbyterian pastor come to an understanding of the faith. This pastor stated, "Gruthie simplified the faith so that I began to see what my seminary professors tried to teach me ten years ago." On reading C. S. Lewis' Problem of Pain a Roman Catholic priest stated that he began to see pain as lessons from God. Now when

he is in a painful situation he attempts to learn and grow from that situation. A United Methodist pastor in a full-time counseling ministry felt that the Paul Tillich three volumes work, Systematic Theology, helped him make sense of why, if God is a loving God, there is tragedy in the world.

Three of the pastors reported that books on theology helped them formulate their professional concepts of ministry and their self-concepts of their roles in that ministry. A Roman Catholic priest stated that reading the Documents of the Second Vatican Council, "created a greater love for my priesthood, Church, and God. These documents helped me understand my faith and the need to teach that faith to others." A United Methodist pastor felt that Helmut Thielicke forcefully presented the idea of integrity in his The Trouble with the Church. He has chosen this idea to be the keystone of his preaching, teaching, and life. Crossways helped one Missouri Synod Lutheran pastor understand salvation history and the importance of its teaching in the local church.

Three pastors stated that biographies had helped them in their relationship with God. These biographies the pastors listed are: Bill Wallace of China by Jessy C. Fletcher, Moody by John C. Pollock, and an autobiography of Smith Wiggleworth entitled Ever Increasing Faith.

Each of these three male pastors reported that they identified with the person they read about. One Southern

Baptist pastor stated that through studying the life of D. L. Moody he gained insight into how God could use a person's weakness for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. This pastor stated, "I began to not be so hard on myself and let God use me the way He wanted to. I have found that I am much happier and that my ability to relate to others has increased." Another Southern Baptist pastor felt that reading about the missionary work in China of Bill Wallace helped him develop a pastoral identity of a missionary wherever he found himself. This preacher stated that, "I became inspired to preach the Word in every situation I found myself." An Assemblies of God student pastor stated that the autobiography of Smith Wiggleworth helped him understand that all Christians can be better if they let the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Three pastors felt that worship resources helped them in their relationship with God. These pastors stated that the Book of Common Prayer (1928), "the old Methodist Book of Hymns," and Science and Health with a Key to the Scriptures by Mary Baker Eddy helped them in their religious quest.

An Episcopal priest, who was reared in the Methodist Church, stated that the Book of Hymns had been a most helpful resource to him in his relationship with God. "When I feel that the world is going to Hell in a handbasket," he stated, "I remember some of the old hymns that my family sang in church. I find that I begin to hum them and I

then develop a better persepective on the world and God." He could not recall any particular hymn or song which had helped him in his relationship with God. Another Episcopal priest felt that the Book of Common Prayer (1928) helped him most in his religious life. Through reading the daily morning and evening office he stated that he felt that he was connected with the whole of Christ's church. This knowledge gave him the security to face each of the day's problems and the ability to minister to those around him. Reading worship literature helped these two Episcopal priests remember their personal and Christian heritage.

A Christian Science practitioner stated that reading Science and Health with a Key to the Scriptures helped him in his relationship with God. He stated, "Mrs. Eddy's life and work helps one see the total truth of what is reality and what is unreal. Through her work I have found that I can place in perspective the events which make up my life." He claimed that he could not identify one area of growth because he felt that Mrs. Eddy's work had influenced every area of his life.

Three pastors felt that psychological literature had helped them in their relationship with God. The books which these three pastors stated helped them in their relationship are: Codependent No More by Melody Bettie, Please Understand Me by David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates, and Theories of Personality by Hal Lindzey.

Each pastor who had read psychological literature stated that it helped him or her understand him/herself and others. This understanding helped them see how God works in all people. A United Church of Christ pastor felt that Codependent No More helped him understand the past of his wife and himself. This understanding helped him develop insight into how relationships develop and how relationships can hurt or heal. He stated, "It was at this point that I began to see how my, and others, relationship with God was formed and the importance of having a good relationship with the Lord. It was then that I became a member of a twelve step group which has changed my life."

An American Baptist pastor and a Lutheran pastor felt that the books they read helped them see how people are different and how that difference affected their relationship with God. Please Understand Me helped one pastor see that each personality type had its own way of relating to God. This pastor then found what his personality type was and discovered that he was trying to worship God in a way which was not compatible with his personality. Through additional reading he found ways which he could relate to God. He claimed that it was then he began to relate to a loving God rather than God as taskmaster. Theories of Personality helped one pastor see that each person develops differently and that God related to each person as they were able to understand Him. This insight helped this pastor look at his life and determine where he needed to grow in his relationship with God.

Three pastors found books relating to the practice of the spiritual disciplines helpful in their growth in relating to God. The three books which helped these pastors are: Celebration of Discipline by Richard Foster, Spiritual Direction by Kenneth Leach, and Pathways of Spiritual Living by Susan Muto.

The Richard Foster book helped one United Methodist pastor develop the spiritual disciplines of prayer and reflection. He stated that these disciplines "...bring an order to my life. I need to take the time to reflect on my relationship with God and my family." Pathways of Spiritual Living helped one United Reformed Minister of Religion understand how spiritual disciplines help transform personality into an image of God. He stated, "I never understood the power of words and the images they provoke in transforming man in the image of God. What I read can make a difference in what I become." Both pastors felt that the practice of spiritual disciplines could change their lives.

One of the respondents, a woman preparing for the ministry of spiritual direction, found the Kenneth Leach book, Spiritual Direction, to have been instrumental in formulating her objectives in life. She said that

> ...through this book I realized my call in life was to help those with spiritual problems. On further reflection I see that books have been my spiritual director through most of my life. I view reading as being an encounter of the word with the Word. Christ, through the working of the Holy Ghost, can use words to make a connection between me and Him. Reading, for me, is an encounter with the living Christ in His presence. To read with the presence and leading of

> Christ is to again come into His love and teaching. Of course my reading must be in cooperation with a body of believers, the weekly taking of Holy Communion, and Holy Scripture for me to be in relationship with Christ when I read.

She claimed that she read for spiritual insight every day and practiced lectio divina on a regular basis.

Two Roman Catholic priests stated that reading a work of a spiritual master had helped them in their relationship with God. The two works by spiritual masters which helped these two pastors are: The Imitation of Christ by Thomas a Kempis and The Seven Story Mountain by Thomas Merton.

An Asian priest felt that The Imitation of Christ helped him develop a goal of what his life and ministry was to become if he were to reflect Christ in all that he did. The Seven Story Mountain helped the other priest understand his call to the priesthood. He stated

> That as my life changes I needed to rethink my vocation and personhood. Merton has been an influence on my life in seminary, friends of mine had him as a spiritual director, and this book in particular had influenced me in my early years as a priest. Today when I read this book I remember my original call to my vocation and somehow I am able to weather the changes in my life, parish, and church.

These books helped these two priests see what they could become and remember their original call into the priesthood.

One Church of God in Christ pastor believed that reading the Pulpit Commentary had been the most influential literature in developing his relationship with God. He stated, "It is only through understanding the Bible that we can hope to understand God."

A deacon in the Episcopal Church stated that Angus Sanford's The Lost Shepherd had been most influential in her growth in a relationship with God. She stated, "I grew from this book because it taught me to pray. Even though the characters were fictional, they spoke to me in a way about prayer that no seminary class or text ever had." It was through her working on her prayer life that she began to feel that she was loved by God. She further stated, "The realization that I could be in a relationship with a loving God made me realize that I needed to be loving to those in whom I came in contact. God's love needed to be passed to everyone, not just the few I liked."

A minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) felt that reading stories about the Plains Indians had been most helpful in his life. He stated,

> ...these stories or myths helped me see the spiritual side of my nature. That we all must have a meaning or purpose which we live by. Through these myths I came to see the importance of the Christ myth in my life. It is my attempt to live the Christ myth or event in everyday life that gives a purpose to my life.

A United Methodist minister could remember that he was reading something religious when he had an experience which he described as mystical. He could not recall the title or the author of the literature he was reading. He did claim that this experience increased his awareness of God and of God's care and love. He stated, "I was caught up in a feeling of warmth and joy beyond what I could ever imagine. This experience changed my life in all its aspects." He stated that he was unable to recall what he was reading,

but that it had to be something which God used to "trigger" his experience.

The information collected from the pastors indicated they grew in their spiritual, relational, organizational, and intellectual dimensions of their personalities. Fifty percent of the responses showed that those interviewed grew in their spiritual dimension of their personality. Growth in interpersonal relationships was reported by 20 percent of those interviewed. Growth in relationships to organizations and groups was reported by 13.35 percent of the respondents. Growth in the intellectual dimension was reported by 13.35 percent of the respondents. The interview of one person (Christian Science) could not be placed in any one category because of the influence Science and Health With a Key to the Scriptures had in each area of his life. None of those interviewed indicated growth in their relationship with their body, and with the biosphere. Table 7 presents the areas of growth in each of the Clinebell dimensions of personality.

The information collected from the pastors indicated they grew in each of the areas Clinebell lists as producing salugenic religion. Four of the pastors indicated that spiritual reading helped them develop a philosophy of life. Two of those interviewed indicated that their reading helped them develop creative values. Five of the respondents felt that their reading helped them develop a better relationship with a loving God. Four of the respondents stated

TABLE 7

TYPE OF GROWTH PRODUCED THROUGH
SPIRITUAL READING BY DIMENSION OF PERSONALITY

Dimension of Personality	Number	Percentage
Inner growth	4	13.35%
Growth with the body	0	0.00%
Growth in relationships with others	6	20.00%
Growth with the biosphere	0	0.00%
Growth with organizations	4	13.35%
Growth in the spiritual life	15	50.00%
Growth in all dimensions	1	3.30%
Total	30	100.00%

that their reading helped them feel they belonged to others and to the world. Eight stated that each developed a relationship with his/her Higher Self. One pastor reported that reading had induced a peak experience. Five pastors indicated that spiritual reading had helped or enabled them in creating a community of caring and nurturing. The data gained from the interview with the Christian Science practitioner could not be placed in any one category. Table 8 presents the responses of how spiritual reading helped pastors grow in their religious outlook.

TABLE 8

SPIRITUAL READING IN DEVELOPING SALUGENIC RELIGION

Religious Dimension	Number	Percentage
Develop a philosophy of life	4	13.3%
Develop creative values	2	6.7%
Develop a relationship with a loving God	5	16.7%
Develop a feeling of belonging	4	13.3%
Develop the higher self	8	26.7%
Develop peak experiences	1	3.3%
Develop relationships with a caring community	5	16.7%
Undetermined	1	3.3%
Total	30	100.0%

Most of the pastors stated that they had not thought about a method of reading. Fourteen of the pastors stated that they had no method of reading that they could recall. Ten of the respondents stated that when they read spiritual literature they read reflectively. Praying for guidance was the practice of three of those interviewed. Two priests of the Episcopal Church stated they read morning and evening prayer from the Book of Common Prayer according to the regulations of their church. One woman stated she practices a form of lectio divina. Table 9 presents the types of methods used by the pastors in their spiritual reading.

Analysis

The data gathered from the thirty interviews indicates that these pastors had read some form of literature which had helped them grow in their relationship with God. Only

TABLE 9

METHODS OF READING SPIRITUAL LITERATURE

Method	Number	Percentage
None	14	37.7%
Reading reflectively	10	33.3%
Pray before reading	3	10.0%
Reads of Offices in the Book of Common Prayer	2	6.7%
Lectio Divina	1	3.3%
Total	30	100.0%

two of those interviewed, however, stated that the literature which had most helped them grow in their relationship with God was literature written by a spiritual master. The other literature the pastors gave as helping them in their relationship with God was varied and, in the opinion of the

researcher, tended to reflect the theological bias, age, and educational level of the respondent.

The pastors interviewed could identify growth produced through reading spiritual literature. Based on the Cline-bell six dimension of growth typology, pastors grew in the areas of: inner growth, growth in relationship with others, growth in relationship with organizations, and spiritual growth. The responses of the pastors also indicated that their reading had produced growth in all areas of the Cline-bell typology of salugenic religion.

The growth produced through reading seemed to have been gradual. The responses indicated that reading helped the pastors gain insight into pre-existing beliefs or began a process of growth and change which occurred sometime later. Only one of the respondents reported an immediate change in his life due to reading. However, this experience could be considered mystical and atypical. The pastor who had this experience stated that it was through reading about mystical experiences that led him to integrate this experience into the other dimensions of his life.

A reason the respondents reported a gradual growth through their reading is that in each case the literature was chosen by the pastor and read at his or her convenience. Self-selected literature could reflect pre-existing beliefs and thus be unconsciously selected to maintain a theological status quo. Any growth produced could be considered coincidental rather than intentional.

Another reason the respondents reported a gradual growth through their readings is the expectation that reading can produce any growth in their lives. Only one woman reported that she expected to learn anything from her readings. She indicated a belief that words had a power to form images and that images had a power to affect thoughts, feelings, and behavior. She chose her books carefully, hoping to learn from them, but at the same time ensuring that they were orthodox in Christian faith and doctrine.

A third reason that spiritual growth is gradual may lie in the belief that only true spiritual growth can come from reading Holy Scripture. In each instance when a pastor was contacted to participate in the study, the researcher had to explain why he wanted to discuss literature other than Holy Scripture. The pastors in this interview solidly believed that the Bible was the foundation of all spiritual growth through reading. The pastors seems to have had a much lower regard for other forms of literature in producing growth in a relationship with God.

This study indicated that there were only two types of literature which produced consistent responses. Theological literature tended to produce an intellectual understanding of the faith. Reading autobiographies and biographies tended to produce a bond between the reader and the subject of the book. From this sample it appears that the growth produced is an interaction between the literature and the reader. These factors would indicate that the reasons for growth are very individualistic and subjective processes.

There appears no correlation between reading methods and any growth produced. A better correlation of producing any type of growth is the expectation of the reader that he or she can grow through reading regardless of method.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to present and analyze the data gathered on reading spiritual literature and its effects on human growth. The thirty pastors interviewed for this study indicated that reading did help them grow in their relationship with God and in other areas of their lives. Only two respondents stated that a book written by a spiritual master had helped them in their religious growth. Reading tended to be a relationship between the literature and the reader and so no cause and effect relationship could be found between the type of literature and growth produced. There was no relationship found between any reading and any growth reported.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The research problem of this study was: To determine the kinds of literature individuals have read in order to enhance their spiritual growth. Reading for spiritual growth has had a long tradition within the Christian tradition. However, little academic research has been conducted in this area of spiritual development. With a new interest in spiritual development and human growth and potential, research in all aspects of spiritual growth is needed.

The theoretical foundation for this study was Growth Counseling formulated by Howard Clinebell. This theory states that persons must attend to their spiritual nature if they are to reach their full potential. When a person develops a healthy spiritual, religious outlook he or she has the ability to integrate growth in all dimensions of his or her life. The ability to integrate growth in each dimension of life increases the possibility of future growth and the ability to reach his or her full potential. This spiritual growth, Clinebell believed, is the key to all growth.

Thirty pastors from eighteen denominations were interviewed and data gathered on what literature they read, how they grew from reading that literature, and if they used any methods in reading spiritual literature. Their answers

were compared to a list of spiritual masters prepared for this study to determine if they were reading literature from the classical spiritual tradition. The Clinebell growth typology for personality and religious growth was used to analyze the responses of the pastors on how they grew from reading spiritual literature.

This study determined that pastors interviewed did read in order to increase their spiritual growth; however only two pastors had read classical spiritual literature. The pastors stated that reading produced primary growth in one of the following dimensions of their personality: inner growth (13.35 percent), growth in relationships with others (20 percent), growth with organiztions (13.35 percent), and spiritual growth (50 percent). The pastors reported that their reading did not produce growth with their body or with their relationship with the biosphere. The pastors did report that spiritual reading had helped them grow in their spiritual life by developing a philosophy of life (13.3 percent), creative values (6.7 percent), a relationship with a loving God (16.7 percent), a feeling of belonging (13.3 percent), a relationship with the higher self (26.7 percent), an understanding or peak experiences (3.3 percent), and a relationship with a caring community (16.7 percent). One response could not be tabulated in any of the above categories. The reading method the pastors used was reading reflectively, lectio divina, praying for guidance before reading, and reading the daily office in the Book of

Common Prayer. Most of the pastors interviewed did not have a reading method.

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of this research study were met through the production of four tables based on the data gathered through thirty interviews.

The first goal and objective for this research study was:

> To develop a list of reading resources based on those which the respondents have found to be helpful in their spiritual growth.

A list of the twenty-nine works of literature the pastors found helpful in their spiritual life is found in Table 6.

The second goal and objective for this research study was:

> To create a list of the methods the respondents used to read spiritual literature.

A list of the methods the respondents used to read spiritual literature in found in Table 9.

The third goal and objective for this research study was:

> To create a list of the ways those surveyed enhanced their lives through spiritual reading.

List of the ways the respondents enhanced their lives through spiritual reading is found in Table 7 and Table 8.

Analytical Questions

The data gathered from the thirty interviews with pastors did answer the five analytical questions which guided this research.

AQ_1 What books other than Holy Scripture have the respondents found to be helpful for growth in their spiritual life?

The literature the pastors found helpful for their spiritual growth is found in Table 6. This literature included works from the following ten areas: spiritual living, theology, biography, worship resources, psychological studies, spiritual direction, the spiritual masters, Biblical commentaries, fiction, and two pieces of literature which could not be placed in any category.

AQ_2 Are books the respondents found helpful for growth in their spiritual life by the spiritual masters according to a list prepared for this study?

Two of the twenty-nine books the pastors reported to have helped them in their spiritual life were considered to be spiritual classics. These books were: The Imitation of Christ and The Seven Story Mountain.

AQ_3 Do the respondents have a method of reading spiritual literature?

Sixteen of the respondents stated that they did have a method of reading spiritual literature. Fourteen of the respondents stated that they did not use any method to read spiritual literature.

AQ_4 What types of methods are used by respondents who have a method to read their spiritual literature?

Ten pastors stated that they read reflectively. This was most often described as reading a short passage and then thinking about that passage in relation to the life of the reader. Three pastors stated they prayed for guidance of the Holy Ghost in their reading so that they would find information they needed for their life or ministry. Two pastors stated they followed the daily offices in the Book of Common Prayer. One woman stated that she practiced lectio divina when she read for spiritual growth.

AQ_5 What changes did the respondents feel reading spiritual literature made in their lives?

None of the pastors reported any behavioral changes due to reading spiritual literature. They did report that they developed insight or grew in the following dimensions of their personality: inner growth, growth in relationship with others, growth with organizations, and growth in their spiritual life. They did not report any growth in their relationships with the biosphere or with their bodies due to spiritual reading. Spiritual reading helped them in their religious life by helping them develop a philosophy of life, creative values, a relationship with a loving God, a feeling of belonging, peak experiences, and relationship with a caring community. The small sample of this research prevented any determination if one type or work of literature produced one type of change.

Implications for Practice

The data collected in this research study indicated that reading spiritual literature can affect growth in the life of a person. There appears, based on the data collected and the opinion of the researcher, that there is not a "cause and effect" relationship between the literature and the reader. The growth produced is a relationship between the individual life situation of the reader and the individual nature of the literature read. It is recommended that when a piece of literature is recommended to foster spiritual growth, that it be recommended with a knowledge of the person the literature is being recommended to, the literature recommended, and without expectation of growth in any one area. If growth is deemed necessary in any one area (e.g., the need to belong to a caring church group) then the person recommending the literature should inform the reader of what the reader should be aware of in his or her reading. A second approach is that after the reader has read part of the literature the one recommending the book should talk with the reader about what the reader has read.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the researcher offers the following recommendations for further research:

1. A study be conducted on the knowledge of pastors on the authors and literature of the Christian spiritual tradition.

2. A study be conducted on personality type and the preference for reading spiritual literature.
3. A study be conducted on growth from reading spiritual literature and whether the person has an internal or external locus of control.
4. A study be conducted on whether spiritual growth occurs at a faster rate if the reading is done individually or in a reading discussion group.
5. A study be conducted on whether reading a single title will produce the same type of growth in similar personality types.
6. A study be conducted on what children have found helpful in their spiritual growth.
7. A study be conducted on what young adults have found helpful in their spiritual growth.
8. A study be conducted on what non-clergy adults have found helpful in their spiritual growth.
9. A study be conducted on comparing what clergy, non-clergy adults, young adults, and children have found helpful in their spiritual growth.
10. A study be conducted on comparing the differences between men and women on what they have found to be helpful in their spiritual growth.
11. A study be conducted comparing the differences between persons of different dominations and what they have found to be helpful in their spiritual growth.

12. A study be conducted comparing the differences between religious and non-religious on what they have found to be helpful in their spiritual growth.

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

LIST OF SPIRITUAL MASTERS

The following list of spiritual masters was compiled from Cox (Cox, 1985:9-11) and Muto (Muto, 1973:165-171):

Literature of Traditional Catholic Spirituality

Aelred of Rievaulx. Treatises, Pastoral Prayers

a. Kempis, Thomas. The Imitation of Christ

Anonymous. The Cloud of Unknowing

Augustine. City of God

---. Confessions

Benedict. The Rule of St. Benedict

Bernard of Clairvaux. On the Song of Songs I

Brother Lawrence. The Practice of the Presence of God

Chautard, Jean Baptist. The Soul of the Apostolate

Eckhard, Meister. Sermons

Francis of Assisi. The Little Flowers of St. Francis

Francis de Sales. Introduction to the Devout Life

Hilton, Walter. The Scale of Perfection.

Ignatious of Loyola. The Spiritual Exercise of St. Ignatius

John of the Cross. Ascent of Mount Carmel

---. The Dark Night of the Soul

---. Spiritual Canticle

___. Living Flame of Love

Julian of Norwich, The Revelations of Divine Love

Libermann, Francis. Spiritual Letters to Clergy and Religious

Richard of St. Victor. Selected Writings of Contemplation

---. The Twelve Patriarchs

Role, Richard. The Fire of Love

Teresa of Avila. Interio Castle

---. The Way of Perfection

Therese of Lisieux. The Autiobiography of St. Therese of Lisieux

William of St. Thierry. On Contemplating God

Literature of Reformation Spirituality

Brinton, Howard. The Quaker Doctrine of Inward Peace

Browne, Thomas. Religio Medici

Donne. John. Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions

---. The Prayers of John Donne

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson

Fox, George. Journal

Herbert, George. The Poems of George Herbert

Kierkegaard, Soren. Training in Christianity

Lewis, C. S. Mere Christianity

---. Surprised by Joy

Martz, Louis. The Meditative Poem

Milton, John. Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained

---. Samson Agonisties

The Rule of Taze

Taylor, Jeremy. The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living

Traherne, Thomas. Centuries, Poems, and Thanksgivings

Woolman, John. The Journal of John Woolman

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

SPIRITUAL READING GUIDED INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

Denomination

Age

Sex

Race

Educational level

Years in full-time ministry

Other than Holy Scripture, what one piece of literature have you read which has most helped you in your relationship with God?

Describe how this piece of literature helped you grow in your relationship with God, including what changes you made in your behavior and insight gained.

When you read for spiritual growth, do you have any special methods, rituals, or techniques which you use?